1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in company. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of dependants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*ingombe ya kubusugwa*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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peraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanuma*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya ngonya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

1. IN SELVA AND NUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

581 The puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the
585 marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty
587 and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they
596 grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and in 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to
570 refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan
565 girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age at puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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581 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
584 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyobwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the entering of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

584 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
●585 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

584 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilitemelo* and *ulufundo*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwandu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

588 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass body-rings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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them and polite greetings were exchanged. The bride herself crouched down with her head covered with a cloth, but after the greetings were completed she sat up and chatted with them. Then one of the groom's 'village mothers', who was the officiant in the ritual, his sister, and two young women from his village, took the bride to the stream to wash. The officiant told the young women to carry her, which they did for a few yards, then they put her down. Her maids sang and she herself danced a few steps. Women came out of the houses as we passed, dancing and clapping. At the stream the bride took off her old bark-cloth and bathed with her maids. As she finished she stepped into a flat winnowing basket (*ulusolo*) for a minute, then stepped out, and her husband's sister decked her with four brass body-rings (*side* plate 7) and a folded cloth (*umpepe*) hanging down from the rings behind like a tail. The bride shook the 'tail' and the others laughed and cried: '*Kipetulo*[1] *tukumupeka*[2] (It is turned over! We clothe her with the male genital covering!)' They walked back again laughing, and when they reached the first houses one of the party said: 'We should carry her now.' Another demurred: 'Let's go a little further, she's heavy.' Then a woman of the village came along and called: 'Carry her! Carry her!' They arrived at her mother's house singing: '*Niya, Niya, Niya*! (Put me down!)' The groom's 'mothers', the bride herself, and her maids, all sang this. The rest of the groom's party joined in and they walked up and down the courtyard carrying her and singing '*Niya, Niya.*' The groom's own mother carried a winnowing basket on her head and the bride's 'mothers' rushed out and threw into it small bowlfuls of millet, maize, pumpkin-seeds and lentils.[3] This grain goes to the groom's 'mothers': 'The mother-in-law drinks beer made from the millet.' Then the bride was made to sit down in the doorway of her mother's hut; the officiant sat behind her, shaved a little of the sprouting hair from the front of her head, and smeared her head, arms, legs, and stomach with ointment and red powder supplied by her own mother. Powdered medicine supplied by the groom's mother was added to the shaving water.

When her toilet was completed, the women called the men to come and give their gifts. The bride and her maids crouched down and the cloth removed from her buttocks was spread

[1] *Okupetula*: to turn over.
[2] *Okumupeka*: to clothe, from *ikipe*: male genital covering.
[3] Beans, cowpeas and ground-nuts are also mentioned as being given at this time.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 over her and the maids closest to her. Her father, Mwasofu, and four or five other men, his village mates, came to give her gifts to break the taboo (*ukudesola*). Her father came first and asked: 'Which is she?' She was pointed out to him and he gave her 10 cents, greeted her with the words 'Good morning, my child', and shook hands. At the same time he admonished her saying: 'If you ever go away from your husband who has married you, then you have a case against you, you have a great case against you.'

The other men followed: 'Good morning, good morning, you have recovered.' They gave some cents and shook hands and repeated her father's warning. One, having no cents, brought a spearhead which he said he would redeem later for 50 cents.

585 Then over the girl's head the father spoke to the officiant:
583 'Where are the bull and the other cow?'

Officiant: 'I am poor. Thank you for giving us your daughter, thank you.'

Father: 'Pay a bull. See, my child has stayed at home a long time. It is seven months since she grew up and it is not right that she should stay here always. Bring the bull!'

Officiant: 'Yes, we all regret that, but I am very poor.'

A mother: 'You know very well that our child is pure [i.e. a virgin].'

Father: 'See, she is the eldest daughter, and there is someone here with a case against him. My brother has expectations from her, he is claiming cattle. If her husband comes to carry her off we will beat him, we will beat him, we will take cattle.'

585 Then the men went away and the women, 'mothers' and 'mothers-in-law', together began to admonish (*ukufunda*) her. 'Yesterday evening she was a child, now she has grown up, she is a woman, let us tell her about womanhood.' Her father's second wife, and an elderly woman of her father's village, talked most, but advice was shouted at her by several women at once and it was impossible to take it down verbatim. The following points were mentioned: She must cook for her children. (This was repeated with emphasis.) She must cook for her husband; she must be gentle (*usolo*) to her children; she must welcome and cook for her mothers when they come to see her.

One mother said: 'If your husband has built in a boys' village and his fellows come wanting water to drink don't say: "There is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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no water." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring her up properly, she behaves proudly." '

Another whispered: 'When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you,' and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: 'You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself.' During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crouching round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kasitile explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not swear at my wife, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her.' 'The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a harsh (*ukali*) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, tend the fire, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from hoeing at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (*namatinga*) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive *naa* and not just say *ah*; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' (*ingombala jakuvanga*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*ukulula*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijimmaga*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would stylized dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kui in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 68, 3a, 3c, 7a.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingesia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*inyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafigo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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5. Shaving the bride

[facing p 100]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father- 606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the 811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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6. The groomsmen dance the stamping dance

[facing p. 101]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age-village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the *ilibalaga*, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwabasungu* is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the husband and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubunyago* ritual is to protect the physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubunyago* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamo kwetu, jo il.po jetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ukukama*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ukilolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*ukukama gwange*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has *come*. She is now my relative (*ukama gwange*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakisonde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the
839 officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingesia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but
[847] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."'

783 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for
881 every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a clean-
585 sing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakweleteja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alamukile ukwinga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself
[765] with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalinjo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ukwinga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kasitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*akakilaepa*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kasitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angumbwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngapele amote*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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§31 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
•515 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikinge*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'

QUESTION: *Kipitale?*

ANSWER: *Kipitale* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

§32 *Kipitale*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*katoni*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

§31 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko
515 said:
783

We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*mema*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububili*).

§31 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces,
515 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Niyu*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*longa linde*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*akalomelo*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Niyu, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] *Mwakisondo* denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.
[2] *Ukuniyu*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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means: Since you have carried me, put me down, mother, I am a woman,' i.e. this is the symbolic ending of childhood.

Mwakwelebeja's wife interpreted stepping into the winnowing basket as being 'in order that she may cook well for her husband and serve his food nicely'. Kasitile, when asked about it, replied:

They honour the fearful ones (*abipaya*) themselves, saying: 'This is your child, she is Kyala, we are performing the ritual for her.' If they honour an *amaipaya* on the ground Kyala is startled, the child runs mad, she is ill. . . . In these customs we come together to teach the child. Kyala said: 'Shake the winnowing basket for a daughter and say: "We have sent you to your husband; if we hear of cases at your husband's you are no child of ours."' The mothers of the village instruct the girl. She ought to look towards her mothers-in-law (as they do so) and, if she does not, they beat her again, saying: 'Those are your mothers there, we are not relatives, look to them over there.'

Mwakionde, a doctor, interpreted most of the events in the same way. Asked about the cloth hung over the bride's buttocks, he replied:

It is because during the puberty ritual she does not wear iron [i.e. metal] or a good bark-cloth. . . . Then the cloth comes from the husband [*sic.*] with the three body-rings. It is a way of saying: 'She's my wife.' They carry her and say: *Niya*.

QUESTION: Why?

MWAKIONDE: Because she has grown up. Until now she was a child. A while ago we bore and begot her, now she has grown up herself and is honoured, she herself begins to bear a child. It is to finish and say: 'Go to your husband and bear your own children.' Her mothers and the women of her father's village throw millet and maize and pumpkin-seeds. It is a rejoicing. Our child has flourished, she has grown up. They give the seed to her mother-in-law, the mother of the groom, and she takes it away.

QUESTION: Is it not a ritual?

MWAKIONDE: No, it is only a rejoicing.

Mwaihojo's daughter, asked why millet was thrown into the basket, replied simply: 'It is shaken, we are rejoicing greatly,' and indeed the basket is shaken in time to the dance, almost like a tambourine.

The theme of rejoicing recurs again and again in the course of the ritual. At the 'putting her in' her mothers dance with her on their shoulders 'to honour her because my child has grown up';

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17 .
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881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
885 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
745 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.
431

> To give presents (*ukukomila*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutiila* (respect and
604 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*wakwesewe*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*wamatinga*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.'

Mwandini (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDINI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the liver a bull that they may eat?

Mwakiombe (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ubukwesewe*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*wasolile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers.

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakiombe in this way:

It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingombolo jubo-nanga*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *jubonanga* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 63-4.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the lister the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakisonde, the doctor, explained:

[583] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mimbi*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukuma ililopa ijo nombe ku lusipute*).

Mwakibela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*kilundaga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ijo nenaga* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

582 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *now eat a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwasilaga explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kiyuluga chikolo chilo*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

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have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakitela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalego* or *ilibalo* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overstays her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come her from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstayed the child' or 'The child has overstayed the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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§81 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
781
783 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kusyfa*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhoea. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kukweya ubupuli*). . . . The mother's diarrhoea is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhoea, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhoea, the filth of my wife.

QUESTION: Is the *ilibelaga* to drive away the shade again?

KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhoea and may not become weak.

§81 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibelo* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

§81 Failure to bring the *ilibelaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
793 Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

§81 After the *ilibelaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
600 ments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*akatila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *akatila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83-8, 108, 113, 180-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 107-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 581 184 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse—all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 581 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-between in the marriage (*mufuge*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipiki* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupyana ukutenda*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above hers) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

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between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (*ukugenjeya*).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (*ukusumbulila*) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of *ukunyaya* (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the *ukunyaya* (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and[1] lowering her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shreds and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the ashes of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kukwe *ukunyaya* rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared most reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kukwe ritual cycle.

[1] It was not made clear by Kukwe informants exactly when this happened.

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K.K.C.

The words 'refer to the cries of the mother in labour'—'they symbolize the adolescence of the bride and the toil of the mother in labour.'

They went together to the stream, the girl's mother walking after they were past the homesteads. The girl and her mother sat down on the bed of the stream, facing down-stream. The other women made them hold out their hands, and between each finger and toe, and behind each ear, they placed a small pebble. Flowers and grass, twisted together, were placed on their heads, with stones on top. Then both were made to lie down in the water. The girl was pushed down and dipped gently. She protested a little and was told: 'You are proud.' The women and girls on the bank laughed. She was told to take off her clothes and wash herself and, looking rather embarrassed, she went a little way up-stream into the shelter of some bushes. The women said said she was shy of me. Her mother took off her cloth and washed it, and all the chief's wives present, a younger sister of the mwanga, and another little girl did so also. The mwanga slipped on a fresh dry cloth, her mother a fresh bark-cloth, and each was given a little bunch of ferns and flowers to carry. One woman filled a small calabash with water and the party returned to the mother's house. Mother and daughter were told by the officiant to throw their flowers on to the roof of the hut just above the doorway; she herself poured some of the water brought from the stream on to the thatch and made the girl enter the doorway as the water dripped down. Again she poured water and made the girl come out. The rite was repeated for the mother. Then the officiant took the red ointment she had prepared with medicine, and touched herself with it on the left toe, the left knee, the navel, the left temple, and left elbow. She touched the girl with it in the same places, smeared it on her legs, arms, shoulders, and head, and did the same for the mother, and for the small sister who had washed.

Next she cleared away the banana skins and bean-shells left by the women who had cooked earlier and, along with this refuse, the burnt bark-cloth strip taken off the girl when she washed. There was no fowl (*ulyelambo*), though the women said it was usual for there to be one. Then the girl ate some of the cooked bananas, beans, and mush of beans and bananas prepared, and drank some of the medicated beer with her mother, and the customary rite was at an end.

Usually, we were told, the mothers sing: 'Put me down, Mother, put me down,' as they carry the bride back from the stream after examining her, and throw gifts of grain into a winnowing basket, as they do in Selya, but there was no such rejoicing for this girl. It seemed likely, from the events omitted, that she was known not to be a virgin, but we had no proof of this. When the mwanga is betrothed, her husband also shaves and washes, in cer-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Fundikoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the '—there' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijemapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukwisika*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ukubuka*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijula*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 881 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] Mungasalwa (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubunite*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] Porokoto's Wives: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] Question: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

Wives: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

Mungasalwa: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

Kajuwa: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ulupyapya*: to make fire by friction; *ukupyapya*: to masturbate.

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MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujeggala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukunembulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." '

QUESTION: In the puberty ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

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775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

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●585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *isgunda* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibulo* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopo*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

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782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abalo*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
875 bours have their legs splashed with washing medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are elected, commoners.

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success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyaga*) for death, puberty and marriage, and birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *anyaga* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *anyaga* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyaga*' for 'they help the *anyaga*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organise the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognised. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoso's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *anyaga*, a doctor, but *anyaga* is the more precise word since *anyaga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of reconciliation, no specialist *anyaga* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakiende did in the case quoted) and come very close to organising a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*anyaga*) representing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

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●585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [351] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 602 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 602 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abalo*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abalo* in one generation are *abijwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abijwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 621 615 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abanyago*—from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinctions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

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or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*mwigwe*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katanya, Mwamboputa and Mpema quoted at the end of the book (pp. 238 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*mwigwe*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'cut the rope'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] So also argued by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-90.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938):1957 FN17 Mgende FN17
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[535] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
839 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

778 673 578 681 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour commonly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quarrels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 775 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune have already been quoted (pp. 134-5; 187-8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelileja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's. 613

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union. 613 581

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.' 613

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the insistence of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together. 613 585 881 578

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *izidaba*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero [614 171] 613

[1] E. Fortune, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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584 consent to the marriage, but it should be noted that she has the right of refusal, though it is seldom exercised. Two brides recently refused in church (they were both Christians) to marry the men who stood beside them; and a young girl a few months ago was with difficulty rescued from a hateful marriage, and is now pluckily living her own life, rather than submit to the unsavoury fate which her guardians had ordained for her. In case of refusal, however, the father may wash his hands of the whole matter, and decline to take any steps to find another husband for his disobedient daughter.

To return, the girl takes the hoe, and with the haft smites the cow which is standing there, in token that she accepts the obligations which the payment of the cattle involves. Then she lifts the spear, and hands it to her father, saying, "Slay me with this spear if I am unfaithful to my husband"; and the father, with a grim assurance that he will not fail, lays up the spear in the house, where it will be seen by the ancestral spirits.

584 About a week after the feast which follows, the bride, with one girl friend, and a "mother," but not
• 585 the mother who bore her, goes to the house of the go-between, who gives the mother a fowl, and the bride a piece of bark-cloth, and leads them to the husband's house. With a gift from the husband, the mother now retires, and a succession of small gifts induces the bride to take up her duties: a fowl persuades her to enter the house; some other gift, probably a few cents, induces her to kindle a fire, a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

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585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

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585 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "ee." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

583 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

573 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband if need be. She owns property, but she retains it [586] only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

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In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *kasongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 595 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family: one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a polygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monogamous family by itself.

593 595 601 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these small groups; the word *ekhaki* is sometimes used in the restricted sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *esukwa* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekhaki* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *amako*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] [595] 436 Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father. And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

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present possessions. A young man is given cows by his father and sends them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to give one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in one, two, or three over a period of years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born: the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*ubwinzyelo*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ingwelo*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*ukwombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

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583 584 836 take place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular man to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl [584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okukwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 583 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position 583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls 837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] *Vide infra* "The Age Village" [p. 269, col. 116—Analyst]

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586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 957 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

588 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has defloured her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [149] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly elder friends: with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields: but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters: 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

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622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(b) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

632 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*anake anakulondo*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 631 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

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future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are aimed as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*side plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*side infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize both the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupanda* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupepe*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupanda* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish. and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (80) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (160) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Cruise-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 113.

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

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He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage, he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifiga ili jo malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubuniya bwa bweshe*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

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expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(b) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as was shown in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging so fearful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the stricter among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they share in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, lest his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relatives or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we *do* see that no one avoids her when they meet her face to face.'

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The corpse is buried in a coffin, if the kinsmen can afford one, but it is still placed in a niche dug in the wall of the grave, which is usually in the homestead, for though cemeteries have been marked out in the Christian villages most families prefer to bury their dead at home. The Lutherans kill cattle, some distance from the grave, to feed the mourners but the Moravians and Presbyterians do not, on the grounds that the pagans believe that funeral cattle go with the dead and if Christians kill they seem to support the belief. Relatives, especially sons-in-law, are expected to bring white cloths in place of cattle to show their sympathy and these are used as a shroud, or to bind the chief mourners' bellies, to support them. And the family provide as much fine food—rice, chicken, groundnuts—as they can, for the mourners. But the crowd is smaller than at a pagan funeral for a man of equal standing, because the pagans crowd to funerals to enjoy the feasting and dancing. The Christians sing, and their hymns change from mournful to cheerful ones after the burial, and on the second or third day the young people may dance a little, but without the wild exuberance that succeeds the pagan passion of grief. Often, however, the funeral is a mixed one. Most Christians have pagan relatives and family obligations are not obliterated by differences in faith. So we sometimes heard drumming alternating with Christian hymns, or saw a war dance succeed the burial service, or a pagan woman honouring her Christian sister by dancing with her grain basket, and providing for her future comfort by burying her cooking-pot and cosmetics in the grave. All this the Christian elders present take with tolerance: 'It makes no difference if they choose to do it.'

The wedding celebrations of Nyakyusa Christians are in two parts: there is the solemnization of the marriage in Church and registration by a priest or minister who is a marriage officer, or the blessing of the union by an elder of the Church; and there is the handing over of the marriage cattle accompanied by feasting and dancing and certain other elements of the traditional ritual. The Moravian missionaries are reluctant to celebrate a marriage unless they are very certain of the characters of the bride and bridegroom because of the difficulties and expense of securing a legal divorce if the wife is later deserted by her husband. They prefer that a customary marriage should be blessed by an elder who is not a marriage officer, then, if one partner deserts, a legal divorce is easy.

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The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *ukukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (*ukukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*ukuleka*), but new songs and dancers replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

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A 797 A 795 went away to work again and in time I owned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwaseke [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

583 589

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

A 797 A 795 [761] [985] [762] The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] [668] [273]

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

[535] [684]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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some envy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.